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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 LAGOS 000449

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PTER](#) [ECON](#) [KCRM](#) [KCOR](#) [NI](#)
SUBJECT: NIGERIA: FORMER MILITANT ON NEW NIGER DELTA
MINISTRY, CURRENT MILITARY LEADERSHIP

Classified By: Consul General Donna M. Blair, Reasons 1.4 (B,D)

¶1. (C) Summary: Former militant and current President of the Gbaramatu Youth Council, Sheriff Mulade, and others met with Ijaw members of the Niger Delta Technical Advisory Committee to emphasize that unless the new Niger Delta Ministry were transparent and ministry officials held accountable it would not achieve its purpose; he advocated training civil society groups to monitor the ministry. Mulade further described 80 per cent of the militancy in the Niger Delta as motivated by economic gain and claimed that all major militant leaders were engaged in legitimate businesses, winning contracts from both state governments and international oil companies. Meanwhile, according to Mulade, innocent villages are increasingly the victims of fighting between militant camps, and of reprisals and attacks by the military Joint Task Force (JTF) against the villages suspected of harboring militants. End Summary.

Utility of Niger Delta Ministry Questioned

¶2. (C) On October 27, Sheriff Mulade, a former militant and now President of the Gbaramatu Youth Council, told PolOffs that he met recently with the Ijaw members of the Niger Delta Technical Advisory Committee. According to Mulade, in this meeting the utility of a Niger Delta Ministry was questioned; Mulade, however, argued that unless the financing provided to and by the new ministry was transparent and ministry officials held accountable, the ministry would achieve nothing. He pointed out that "We don't know what happened to the money given to the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC)." He advocated training civil society groups to act as watch-dogs capable of demanding transparency and accountability. At the same meeting with the Technical Committee, the participants agreed that the percent of oil revenues shared by the Federal Government with the States (derivation), 13 percent, is too low and that the goal should be a derivation formula that leaves 50 per cent of oil and gas revenues in the hands of the people from the Niger Delta. Without at least 25 percent derivation, Mulade said, peace cannot be restored to the Niger Delta.

Militant Leaders Own Businesses

¶3. (C) Militancy in the Niger Delta has gradually become "privatized," according to Mulade. He estimated that most of the attacks in the Niger Delta are motivated by personal gain

rather than out of interest in improving the conditions of the population as a whole. Militancy has become a means of obtaining upward economic mobility, Mulade said, with the leaders of almost all militant camps using developed networks of businesses. State government and international oil-companies give contracts to those companies owned and controlled by militant leaders. Militant-owned companies inflate the price of services, ensuring that militant leaders get their cut of the profit. Furthermore, the companies often unnecessarily delay or slow progress on contracts to increase their earnings. Militant commanders are now "no different from other politicians," who also steal, he said. They benefit themselves, but do not build schools or clinics, or provide roads or drinking water to the communities in areas they control, Mulade said.

Villages in Crossfire Between Militants

¶4. (C) This situation, Mulade said, is causing tension in the camps because while the leader is "buying real-estate in Lagos and Abuja, the boys have nothing." The leaders of the established camps buy the loyalty of their second tier commanders with houses and cars, but more junior commanders, who are dissatisfied with their cut, have branched out, setting up their own camps or engaging in kidnapping, piracy and illegal bunkering. This leads to conflict between camps in which innocent people and communities are caught. Mulade confirmed that villages have been destroyed when militants attacked territory held by a rival camp. Mulade pointed out that in addition to the camps from which the militants

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operate, villages have developed in the territory largely controlled by the militants. While traditionally there were only nine towns in the Gbaramatu Kingdom, some sixty communities or villages have recently sprung up. New communities locate in oil-producing areas to benefit from selling produce or providing services to the international oil companies. These often lack infrastructure and are easy targets for retaliation because they lack recognition and patronage.

JTF Attacks Villages to Punish Militants

¶5. (C) Accordign to Mulade, because the JTF finds it difficult to attack well-defended militant camps deep in the riverine areas, it identifies individual militants, then attacks the villages with which they have ties. This is "happening all the time," Mulade said. The JTF may give warnings before such attacks, urging the villagers to surrender the militants and their weapons. However, because cooperating with the JTF often leads to reprisals from the militant camps, the villagers are reluctant to do so. Mulade recounted a recent incident in which a villager was beaten to death by militants when it was discovered he was a JTF informant. Communities are under threat from both sides, Mulade said.

¶6. (C) Comment: Press reporting on the violence in the Niger Delta directed at small riverine communities is almost non-existent. Only high-profile attacks on oil installations and infrastructure or the kidnapping of expatriates and well-connected Nigerians attracts press attention.

¶7. (U) This cable was cleared by Embassy Abuja.
BLAIR